

POVERTY AND WEALTH.

A COMEDY,
IN FIVE ACTS.

TRANSLATED
FROM THE DANISH
OF

P. A. HEIBERG, A. C.

By C. H. WILSON, Esq;



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1799.



TO

CHARLES SCHWARTZ, Esq.

Director of the Theatre Royal, Copenhagen.

DEAR SIR,

I WAS induced to attempt the following hasty Translation of your favourite Comedy, from these Motives,—I was anxious that the only Specimen of the Danish Drama that ever appeared in the English Language, should be selected by you for that Purpose; and I was glad of the Opportunity of publicly expressing the deep Sense I entertain of the many Favours which you have conferred on me.

I am,

Dear Sir,

With sincerest Esteem,

Your very humble Servant,

C. H. WILSON.

London, Jan. 1, 1799.

PERSONS.

Mr. HOWEL.

Lady FLETCHER, his daughter.

BLUNT, his steward.

DALTON, a country gentleman.

Miss HARRIET, his sister.

FAIRWELL, an attorney.

ANDREW, a farmer.

WOTTON, a tradesman.

AN OLD MAN.

JOHN, Mr. Howel's servant.

JACK,

TOM,

WILLIAM,

} Dalton's servants.



POVERTY and WEALTH.

A COMEDY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Room in Dalton's House, with a Tea Table.

HOWEL, BLUNT.

HOWEL [*walks up and down, musing.*] A hurricane has destroyed my plantations—well! Blunt.

BLUNT [*with a letter in his hand.*]

Sir.

HOWEL.

A fire consumed my house, my letters, my notes, and all my securities, very well!

BLUNT.

A letter, Sir.

HOWEL.

Three of my ships richly laden all swallowed up in the sea, well! three sorrows lighter; one article of intelligence more, and then I shall be quite happy.

BLUNT [*advances.*]

Permit me, Sir.

HOWEL.

What a fool to take upon myself the management of my son-in-law's affairs when he embarked for India.

BLUNT.

Lord, he neither hears nor sees.

HOWEL.

How often have I cursed that moment when I determined to live—but come, keep up your spirits, Howel, it is now for the first time you taste the sweets of life, it is now that you are unburthened of your afflictions.

[BLUNT takes him by the Coat.]

HOWEL.

What is the matter? Oh, is that you Blunt? How fares it?

BLUNT.

A letter, Sir.

HOWEL.

A letter, why don't you read it yourself?

BLUNT.

It may contain something.

HOWEL.

Nonsense, every one is welcome to read my letters; how often have I told you, that I would not be plagued with such things; read it.

BLUNT.

Very well, but you must hear it.

HOWEL.

Well then, since I must be plagued so, read quickly.

[BLUNT reads.]

Heaven! what do I see? (*Puts the Letter in his Pocket.*)

HOWEL.

Now, what is it? What affects you? Speak.

BLUNT.

Nothing, nothing, a little disagreeable news.

HOWEL,

Disagreeable, perhaps it may be so to you, Mr. Blunt, not to me. In what does this disagreeable news consist?

BLUNT.

Something—something—to-morrow will be time enough to tell you, Sir.

HOWEL.

I insist on knowing it this very moment; Mr. Blunt, do you take me for an old woman? Why, what you call misfortunes are not misfortunes to me, therefore let me know it all at once.

BLUNT.

Well then, Sir, that vessel which you expected from the Indies is lost—and—

HOWEL.

Is that all? So there's another weight off my shoulders. Congratulate me, my dear Blunt, I am convinced I can't be happy till I am a beggar.

BLUNT.

Would you wish to know more, Sir?

HOWEL.

All, all.

BLUNT.

Well, only one man escaped, and he has reported that Sir William Fletcher shared the fate of the ship.

HOWEL (*alarmed.*)

God, my poor Jenny. [*Runs off.*]

SCENE II.

BLUNT *alone.*

My poor master! I see there are things after all that he must feel like another man, but how shall

I tell Lady Fletcher the news? I must endeavour to break it off gently; I am afraid lest he should tell her first, but—somebody comes.

SCENE III.

BLUNT, JOHN.

JOHN.

Mr. Dalton wants to speak with my master.

BLUNT.

That tedious tiresome fellow, who always speaks in tropes and figures stuffed with metaphors from top to toe, and French into the bargain.

JOHN.

Yes, and so fond of strange allegories that I don't know what to compare him to, and then as to proverbs, he is always sure to give you twelve out of the dozen.

BLUNT.

That's not your business, Mr. John, you are not to criticise on what a gentleman says; it is true, it is too much in the old way (*aside*) my master is engaged in business, so that he cannot be seen to-day; at the same time he desires Mr. Dalton to walk in;—and I'll dispatch him. [*Exit John.*]

SCENE IV.

BLUNT *alone.*

Would to Heaven I were rid of him, his conversation is insupportable to me; I don't know that he is either a fool or a knave, or both perhaps, but I never can forget that he threw open his doors to us at the time of the fire; so far his

loquacity has a demand on our gratitude, and, to be plain, it does no harm if his heart is good—that's the main thing.

SCENE V.

Enter DALTON.

Scarce do the birds rejoice more in the vivifying smiles of the sun, than I do at the welfare of this family and yours, Mr. Blunt.

BLUNT.

You are very kind, Sir, very much so, indeed.

DALTON.

Friendship is the aliment of the soul, and where should I seek for it if not here? *L'amitié c'est l'ame de l'univers.* Friends may be compared to melons, scarce one found in ten.

BLUNT.

Friendship is rather rare now-a-days.

DALTON.

Almost as rare as the black swan. *Rara avis in terris.* As the poet says, adversity is the true touchstone of friendship. But how does my Lady Fletcher find herself? *Elle se porte bien assurément.*

BLUNT.

Very well Sir, but——

DALTON.

And the honest misantrope?

BLUNT.

But——

DALTON.

What do you mean by your but? I never like to find a sentence tagged with a *But*; Comment? A

But in a phrase stands like the balustrade of a bridge, to keep you from falling into the water.

BLUNT.

In the first place I must tell you, Sir, you don't know my master; his heart is one of the warmest and most liberal that can beat in the bosom of man, of course he hates no man.

DALTON.

Don't mistake me, I would not be understood to have said so, Mr. Blunt, but there are many of that description; if it was a plague all the world would have fallen victims to it; I know the old gentleman well; he hates nobody; his actions daily evince it; like the sun he calls forth fertility in his golden race, but he does not like to converse with man.

BLUNT.

Because he has been so often deceived by man.

DALTON.

Tromper c'est la nature de l'homme. Set the fox to watch your geese, and your steward will soon become fatter than yourself; when the fool comes to market, the merchant is sure to get money.

BLUNT.

In the next place I am sorry to tell you that my master cannot speak with any one to-day.

DALTON.

Comment et la raison?

BLUNT.

Oh, Sir, we may be heroes, but there are times which force us to feel that we are but men.

DALTON. [*Aside.*]

The letter has had its effect. Qu'est que cela? I hope nothing has happened to affect the good man; nothing disagreeable, I trust; he has forti-

tude, yet he is but a man, and man is born to suffer.

BLUNT.

Very true, and that is his case.

DALTON.

Est-il possible? mais il faut vous expliquer. He that said he would resist the shafts of destiny with all the firmness of a rock that resists the impetuosity of the tide, what could move him? The dissolution of nature—no, not even that——

BLUNT.

Very natural causes; human fortitude can be shook by many inferior strokes, and by heaven Mr. Howel, in that respect, has still enough of the man about him. Sir, I am convinced at any other time your visits would be very agreeable to him, but to-day——

DALTON.

Mais le raison, il en faut pourtant savoir. What may it be, dear Mr. Blunt? In important affairs secrecy may be the treachery of friendship; when the owl sets out in the chace, then it is time to light the candles, and when the dog sleeps, then the thief has fair play.

BLUNT.

Mr. Dalton, I know my duty; what Mr. Howel wishes to be kept a secret, it is not for Blunt to reveal, otherwise he deserves not the name of a faithful steward.

DALTON.

C'est très bien pensé, mais pourtant le voila.

SCENE VI.

Enter HOWEL. [Takes BLUNT aside.]

Not a word to my daughter,—you understand.

BLUNT.

Heaven forbid! Shall I go?

HOWEL.

Just as you please, there is no secret betwixt us.
[Exit BLUNT.]

HOWEL [*withdrawing.*]

Your servant, Sir; I am sorry I have not time at present to speak with you.

DALTON.

But I have matters of importance to communicate to you. Quelque chose de plus grand importance!

HOWEL.

Then pray be short.

DALTON.

You honoured my house with your presence when you were obliged to abandon your own—some days since.

HOWEL.

Yes, I am sensible of your friendship on that occasion; do you wish to be paid for it.

DALTON.

Point de tout, mon cher ami; I considered it an act of friendship on your part, that you would make the same use of my house that you would of your own. Am I not your friend? The wolf tho' never so gray has friends, though they may be few.

HOWEL.

Then, perhaps, you are come about the 600*l*. I owe you.

DALTON.

Not at all, when you once get possession of a man's esteem you must not enter his house through the pannel of his door; your friendship demanded

that tribute, the price of roast beef must never be calculated.

HOWEL.

What have you to say, then, I pray.

DALTON.

My good Sir, grief was never reckoned a good physician; a pound of sorrow never paid an ounce of debt. Cast away all sorrow, you have not lost all.

HOWEL.

I wished to lose all, and I have lost all. [*Aside.*]

DALTON.

Let me endeavour to dissipate your melancholy, and to cheer up your spirits; you must dance to the tune, if amongst wolves we must howl with them. Du bon humeur mon cher! To-morrow is my sister's birth-day, and I intend to celebrate it.

HOWEL.

I wish her many happy returns of that day, but my presence would only cast a gloom over the scene.

DALTON.

Point du tout, mon cher, we have selected you as one of the principal performers. When old women dance, it can't be called childish amusement. Hark ye, it is to be an allegorical interlude, in the high gout, called the rape of Proserpine.

HOWEL.

My poor Jenny. (*Sighs.*)

DALTON.

No, no, it is not Jenny that is to be snatched away; my sister is to assume the part of Proserpine, Lady Fletcher is to be Ceres, and I am to be Jove; children of one age always play best

together; like to like, the crow seeks the crow, and you know Mr. Jove had a penchant for Miss Ceres.

HOWEL.

I am not disposed for such amusements.

DALTON.

Why not? You shall be Pluto if you please, and sister Harriet Proserpine. What do you think of that? My sister is not without her admirers. C'est un morceau friand. She is well worth a little attention, and without pains you can't even catch flies. In short, you must perform Pluto, and she must be your prize.

HOWEL (*displeased*).

No, on my soul I shan't; I do not understand your follies, and I have something else to engage my thoughts. I'm too old to render myself so ridiculous.

DALTON.

Too old! ha, ha, ha! fifty-three! almost in the prime of life; a handful of minutes, that dissolve away like a wreath of snow in sun-shine.

HOWEL.

Fifty-three [*shakes his head*] there's no apology for playing the fool at that age.

DALTON.

Old age has its toys as well as youth, as the Germans say, and I tell you again you are in your prime; you may boil young fish in an old kettle. Stay, I have some news-papers, in which I'll shew you that you are but a child, a mere child, to others in this respect.

HOWEL.

You may endeavour to persuade me, but in vain.

DALTON.

It is settled, you are to run off with my sister, you perform Pluto—and—

SCENE VIII.

DALTON, HOWEL.

*Enter BLUNT.**(With an account-book under his arm.)*

DALTON.

You come as if you were called. Mr. Blunt, you must take a part in it too—you shall be Cerberus, a single headed Cerberus, the name of the old officer that stood sentry at Pluto's palace-gate.

BLUNT. *(Bows.)*

I thank you for the honour you intend me, I am charged with business of consequence to my master.

(Howel going, DALTON pulls him back.)

DALTON.

Prepare yourself for your part, he that would eat the kernel must crack the shell.

BLUNT *(to HOWEL.)*

I have something of importance to tell you.

DALTON.

Remember my sister, you must carry her off—you must on my word.

BLUNT.

Sir.

HOWEL *(to BLUNT.)*

You are quite impatient, Mr. Blunt, and you, Sir, *(to DALTON.)*

DALTON.

Qui? moi?

(Howel stops a little, and then goes.)

DALTON.

Stay, truth is a gem of inestimable value; he that injures truth buries gold,—what am I?

HOWEL.

I cannot practice hypocrisy, I believe you are an honest fellow, you have given me proofs of it, but I think withal you are very silly. (*Exit.*)

SCENE IX.

DALTON, BLUNT.

DALTON.

Ha, ha, mais il faut s'y meprendre, the crow always calls on his own name, it is not every one that's fond of flies in his own chamber, tho' his head may be full of them, and I know not which is the fillier of the two, he who will let all things take their course, or he who would be measured by his own angle.

BLUNT.

But, Sir, Mr. Howel is not that weak man you take him to be, his conversation may appear odd to those that are not accustomed to his manners, and you, Sir, that know him not so well as I, could make him quite easy with all your good will.

DALTON.

Be easy, Mr. Blunt, do you believe that I don't know how to pare cheese without cutting my fingers.

BLUNT.

I have no doubt of that, Sir, but then there are foibles which we ought not to see, and frailties that we ought to pardon.

DALTON.

Oh si donc, mon cher? Poets and geniuses are odd things, I don't admire them very much, why

Mr. Blunt, a genius may be compared to a porcupine, at the sight of which every person calls to his dog, but dare not touch it himself.

BLUNT.

On this occasion, I was only saying—

DALTON.

Oh laissons cela? Tell me what new misfortune has befallen Mr. Howel, that affects him so much, is it of great weight?

BLUNT.

Of great weight indeed.

DALTON.

Can I afford any relief, you know I told you that my purse is drained—but good advice is better than gold, and perhaps I can give him that, the hare often springs from the thicket, which the huntsman least suspects.

BLUNT.

No, no, advice can be of no service.

DALTON.

Why so, what is the nature of it, it would require the longest line in the universe to fathom the secrets of his heart, Mr. Blunt I shall find it out, Attendez, mon cher! je m'en vais le chercher.
(Exit.)

SCENE X.

BLUNT. (*Alone.*)

Yes, you are gone, after all you have not the eye of a fox-hunter; however, the matter is not to be concealed, but I am afraid it will be the death of poor Lady Fletcher. I'll see how to get rid of the attorney.

[*Going, meets the attorney at the door.*]

SCENE XI.

BLUNT, FAIRWELL.

FAIRWELL.

You have not kept your promise, I have waited for you this half hour, and it is well known that an attorney has no time to lose.

BLUNT.

I know that, but you must excuse me.

FAIRWELL.

Well, Sir, what is your answer, can I get the money?

BLUNT.

I have not been able to—

FAIRWELL.

I cannot stay any longer to speak with you, a man of my profession has something else to do, shall I get the money, yes or no.

BLUNT.

By heaven, my good old master does not intend to cheat you, but I had not an opportunity of speaking to him about it. You know his oddities, you must have patience.

FAIRWELL.

The bond is become due, and my client must have the money.

BLUNT.

You know our distresses in part, but you do not know all.

FAIRWELL.

I must watch you the closer, I know my duty to my client, and must discharge it accordingly.

BLUNT.

You may recollect that the fire deprived Mr. Howell of large sums, and it is not to be won.

dered at, if he cannot immediately satisfy your claims.

FAIRWELL.

So that, because Mr. Howel has been unfortunate, my client must bear a part of it. Do you know of any method by which I can be immediately satisfied.

BLUNT.

No, Sir, but—

FAIRWELL.

Oh, if that's the case, I must do my duty. I must call in the arm of the law.

BLUNT.

Stay a little.

FAIRWELL.

Yes, yes, have you the money?

BLUNT.

No, I wish I had.

FAIRWELL.

Do you think to play the fool with me?

BLUNT.

Listen to a proposition. The sum is 7000*l*.

FAIRWELL.

Exactly—with—you know—I have been a friend.

BLUNT.

You know I have 6000*l*. in the hands of my banker which I have saved in the service of my master, which is all the property I have on earth.

FAIRWELL.

That I know.

BLUNT.

Who can have a better claim to it than my master? Will you accept my check for the amount of the sum?

FAIRWELL.

Very fair, I love men of generosity, but then there will be 1000*l*. still wanting.

BLUNT.

Have you any confidence in my honesty.

FAIRWELL.

No doubt, but a thousand ton of honesty would not fill the least corner of a purse.

BLUNT.

I intreat you by all that is sacred not to distress my old master, distress me as much as you please; spare him, he is already borne down with distress, take my check for the 6000*l.* and my note for the remaining 1000*l.*

FAIRWELL.

I can promise nothing, my client insists on having the whole sum; however, out of tenderness to your master, I'll strive to persuade him to let me have your check and note—but—remember I promise nothing.

BLUNT.

I fly, stay a moment, but for heaven's sake let it be kept a secret.

SCENE XII.

FAIRWELL.

A severe duty to be forced to smile, when the heart bleeds, I really believe that very few of my brother attorneys have any heart at all, or at least if they have, it must be as tough as Indian rubber.

SCENE XIII.

FAIRWELL, DALTON.

DALTON. (*Whispering.*)

How goes it?

FAIRWELL.

He has just gone to bring a check on his banker for 6000*l.* and his note of hand for the remainder.

DALTON.

I hope you did'nt accede to the proposition.

FAIRWELL.

Only ad interim. I only promised to see if I could prevail on my client.

DALTON.

No tendernefs; unseasonable mercy is as pernicious as arsenic and sugar.

FAIRWELL.

Shall I tell him that?

DALTON.

By no means; [*reflects a little;*] le voila trouvé. I can catch two pidgeons with one snare, and kill two flies with one flap; hark'ye, take the check and note at sight, and this afternoon take out a writ, and arrest Mr. Blunt. Entendez-vous?

FAIRWELL.

But how can you do that? would not that be treacherous—and a friend too?

DALTON.

Am I a knave? Don't you know me? trust not your nose in a neighbour's door, when you have no concerns; do as I command you. Hark, somebody comes, it may be him, do as I told you this afternoon. Blunt must be arrested,—no indulgence. (*Exit.*)

SCENE XIV.

FAIRWELL. (*Alone.*)

I don't understand him at all. I have no reason to suppose that Dalton is a villain; I have the papers in my possession; he shall not undo a worthy family. If I accommodate Howel, I must be cautious on my own part.

D

SCENE XV.

Enter BLUNT.

There is the check, and here is the note. (*Gives him two papers.*) I never received a single farthing of the money with half the pleasure I now give it, when I consider, it belongs in fact to my dear old master; I got it through his generosity; what can be more just than to apply it to his use, now that he stands in need of it?

FAIRWELL.

[Having read over the papers.]

Very well, you shall get an answer this afternoon, but I dare not promise any thing, and what is more, I fear this will not settle the matter? The bond is not equal to ready money, and this check does not amount to the sum total.

BLUNT.

Do your best, Mr. Fairwell, I don't know your client, as my master signed the bond himself, heaven knows to whom; perhaps he wishes it to remain a secret, and if so, it is not my business to enquire, but I can scarce believe him to be a scoundrel; I have a better opinion of mankind. (*Exeunt.*)

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Lady Fletcher's Room. Lady Fletcher in a morning Dress, with the Child asleep, a Picture in her Hand set in Diamonds.

The very image of my dear Fletcher, [*Kisses the picture.*] May thy slumbers be sweet, dear boy! The time is hastily approaching, when affliction will

chase sleep away from thine eye lids, [*pauses in silence, walks to and fro, sits down.*] How ungrateful to providence! Can a mother be unhappy, who snatched her babe from the flames? My only treasure now!—ah, my poor baby! [*kisses the child.*] Thy father is lost to us both these many months—scarce did the cruel fates permit me to taste the felicity of his converse [*kisses the picture*] when the unrelenting call of honour hurried him into the service of his country; [*lays the picture on the table, walks up and down*] Ah! Fletcher! Fletcher! perhaps, whilst I now breath the unavailing sigh, thou art numbered with the slain. Ah! heart-rendering thought—a wife, a widow, and thy smiling son fatherless. Who approaches?—my father, perhaps. [*Dries up her tears, runs to the glass*] I must force my countenance, to assume an air that my heart is a stranger to. I must not afflict him beyond what he can bear? [*Takes her needle, and begins to sew.*]

SCENE II.

Enter MISS HARRIOT.

HARRIET.

Good morrow, my dear Lady Fletcher, may I step in?—

LADY FLETCHER.

Certainly, and welcome.

MISS HARRIET.

How do you do?

LADY FLETCHER.

If I don't find myself well, it is certainly neither your nor your brother's fault; you have both been so attentive and obliging to me, your friendship is treasured here. [*Laying her hand upon her heart.*]

MISS HARRIET.

I dare say you have not yet got the better of your fright, your eyes seems swoln, tell me what grieves you.

LADY FLETCHER.

If I—

MISS HARRIET.

It is certain your great loss demands some tears, but not too many, as it can be repaired.

LADY FLETCHER.

The loss I have experienced is nothing, a mere trifle; I have saved all that is dear to me, my father, my child, and this picture, heaven knows the fate of the original. [*Sighs.*]

MISS HARRIET.

You are wise to bear such things with so much firmness, but why does that tear steal down thy cheek? Is there nothing else to call forth your tears but what you have told?

LADY FLETCHER.

O dear Harriet! have you never wept yourself?

MISS HARRIET.

Not that I recollect, since I was about this height.
[*Measuring a certain height with her hand.*]

LADY FLETCHER.

Do you recollect the tears with which you embalmed the memory of your little sister?

MISS HARRIET. (*Pauses.*)

Yes, I do, because I had no one to play with but her. I cried a great deal more then after,

when one of my brother's harriers bit the head of my doll, but then I was only fourteen, and had no understanding.

LADY FLETCHER.

Happy girl, I envy your philosophy! Ah no, I pity you; there is such a luxury in grief, when indulged on certain occasions, that I would not change it for the most enthusiastic raptures, that pleasure falsely called can inspire. I have tasted both.

MISS HARRIET.

They may cry for me that pleases, I prefer smiles to tears.

LADY FLETCHER.

Is there no person for whom you have any particular affection?

MISS HARRIET.

None, except my brother, parrot, and lap-dog.

LADY FLETCHER.

Would you not weep then, if you lost one of them?

MISS HARRIET.

I don't know, I would first be certain of it; in case the parrot or lap-dog were dead, I should get others in their stead, but I should not cry, that I would not. Were my brother to yield to fate, then I should lament the loss, because I could not replace him.

LADY FLETCHER. (*Embraces her.*)

Very well, and if you had a lover?

MISS HARRIET.

A lover, a husband you mean; do you know that my brother has promised to take me with him to London, for the first time in my life? then I

shall gratify my eyes, see the king, queen, pass the day in shopping, and the nights in balls, plays, riots, assemblies, &c. and when I have ran through all these enchantings scenes, then a husband.

LADY FLETCHER. (*Forces a smile aside.*)

Has your brother named the happy man?

MISS HARRIET.

I know not, but I'll leave that to him, he knows best.

LADY FLETCHER.

Would you not wish to make that choice yourself.

MISS HARRIET.

Surely, he understands these matters better than I, and he loves me so tenderly, that I know he'll fix upon a good one; but one thing my lover must promise before he leads me to the altar.

LADY FLETCHER.

What is that?

MISS HARRIET.

That he will use our servants and horses well, and be kind to the six poor women I support.

LADY FLETCHER (*embraces her.*)

Good girl, noble hearted indeed!

MISS HARRIET.

Why, is that much? I could not see the dumb creation in distress, and not hold out my hand; why not then relieve my fellow-creature? My brother and I have laid it down as a rule, that almost all our servants must be cripples, or such as can't be of service to themselves, then they are of some service to us.

LADY FLETCHER.

Why such worth, and want--

MISS HARRIET.

Want! heaven be praised I want nothing, I am as healthy as any girl in the country, and as to wealth, I have more than I can make use of.

LADY FLETCHER.

That's not what I mean, but there are certain feelings—which—

MISS HARRIET.

Yes, do you call that feeling to cry, when others smile? I shan't envy those that think themselves blessed with such fine feelings; I don't like to weep myself, nor do I like to see others weep.

SCENE III.

Enter JOHN.

JOHN.

Mr. Blunt is below, and wishes to speak with my Lady.

LADY FLETCHER.

Desire him to walk up. (*Exit JOHN.*)

[*Blunt, accompanied by a venerable old man, with long white hairs, dressed in a great coat.*]

BLUNT.

My Lady, I take the liberty of introducing this old man to your Ladyship; notwithstanding his appearance he will be welcome to you, as he is entitled to your friendship.

LADY FLETCHER.

Every poor man is welcome to me when I can help him. Pray who is he, be so kind as to let me know

the obligation I am under to him? [*The old man views her with great attention.*]

BLUNT.

In him you see the person whose intrepid courage and humanity snatched your son out of the flames.

LADY FLETCHER.

Presses his hand.] Thou art dearly welcome to me; woe to me if I don't divide the last morsel of bread with thee. [*The old man bows, and kisses her hand.*]

BLUNT.

My Lady, it is of no service to speak to him; he cannot hear you, he is both deaf and dumb.

LADY FLETCHER.

Poor old man, so kind and so distressed! communicate to him, if you can, what I said.

BLUNT.

That I shall, my lady. [*Makes signs to the old man.*]

MISS HARRIET.

[*Takes a purse from her pocket, and then drops it in his hand.*] Good old man! I have no more at present. [*The old man returns the purse, runs to the bed, looks on the child, turns his back, and seems to wipe away a falling tear. Lady Fletcher and Miss Harriet observe him for a while.*]

LADY FLETCHER.

Where did you find this venerable man?

MR. BLUNT.

By the express order of my master we sought him, and found him at last in a miller's cot, a few miles hence.

MISS HARRIET.

Don't you know who he is, and whence he came?

BLUNT.

No, he is dumb, but he has lived in the neighbourhood these five or six days past.

LADY FLETCHER.

Strange! perhaps he lives on charity.

MISS HARRIET.

I am surprized then he should refuse the trifle I offered him.

BLUNT.

Perhaps, he thought it too much. My master desired that he should remain here, and live with the servants; he's very happy that we have found him.

MISS HARRIET.

Yes, we shall take care of him, my dear Fletcher, he shall have good living in his old days, and, it shall be a mutual emulation which can best attend him.

LADY FLETCHER.

Mr. Blunt, I trust to you that you will furnish him with every possible convenience.

BLUNT.

That I should have done without your commands; I am not devoid of feeling; I'll take him along with me. (*Beckons to the old man to follow.*)

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE XV.

LADY FLETCHER.

Now I am less afflicted than I was, and you, my dear, are not less rejoiced.

E

MISS HARRIET.

It will give a zest to my breakfast, it is in the next room, let us walk in.

LADY FLETCHER.

I am ready, my little boy sleeps. [Exeunt.]

SCENE XVI.

The Room in the first Act. HOWEL and DALTON (with an old newspaper in his hand.)

DALTON.

As I told you, the only advice I can give you is to marry again; the best cure for your malady. A good wife, when you are in sound health, is equal to good wine. Et diable m'enporte, il vous en faut.

HOWEL.

What do you want to make me a candidate for Bedlam? May I be found there if I make a fool of myself in my old days.

DALTON.

Now your old age again—fifty-three—a frightful old age, indeed. Des chansons, mon cher! des chansons. A man may walk over a church-yard without slipping into a grave.

HOWEL.

Yes, but when an old man leaps directly into a grave which he sees open, is he not a fool? I say he is; old Howel says so, and he is resolved not to be a fool. Let us see, Howel takes a wife, and, perhaps, a young one;—a rare jest, indeed; would it not?

DALTON.

True, women and mules will hold their own pace in spite of the spur; he that would restrain woman must not trust to the length of the rein, but the strength of his arm.

HOWEL.

My arm is weak.

DALTON.

Weak! the deuce trust the monk in a green coat; no; hark'e, since I can't convince you myself, see—I have some newspapers which will inform us; let us sit down. [*Take chairs and sit down.*]

HOWEL.

I wish to know what magic there can be in a newspaper to persuade me to become an idiot; away with such nonsense, I will not listen to it.

DALTON [*detains him.*]

Eh mon Dieu! restez donc. Can't you spend this day in my company? You promised it, and I know you will keep your word. On my soul, I never knew the man that could leap down his own throat; sit you down, even if it should fatigue you.

HOWEL [*aside.*]

He is in the right, I must tire myself.

DALTON.

I have marked all the accounts of very old people; I don't speak of people anterior to the flood, for they may be called old with great propriety; in that period a girl was scarce in her teens at five hundred.

HOWEL.

Yes, I recollect Methusalem was an old man, so was all the rest of the people, but it was in that time only.

DALTON.

Yes, let us pass them over, and come to our own times [*looks in the newspaper.*] Now there's Murtagh O'Brien, an Irishman, who was 112 years old the very day he buried his mother, April 12, 1768.

HOWEL.

Yes, yes, the Irish live to a great age.

DALTON.

Christian Jacobsen Dradsenberg, in Denmark, attained the 146th year of his age, and in the 111th year he led a blooming virgin to the altar, but soon after became a widower, and paid his addresses to several young girls till the year 1772, when he died.

HOWEL.

Is there no mad-house in Denmark?

DALTON.

Yes, the ass grows grey in her mother's womb, but is not a whit the wiser for that; [*reads*]—John Turpin Montreal, at Lyons, was condemned, in his 109th year, to marry his chambermaid, who in less than nine months after made him the father of twins.

HOWEL.

She might say so—nonsense—I am sick of it—I'll read too. [*Takes a book from his pocket.*]

DALTON [*continues to read.*]

Johannes Christianes Augustus Fredericus Leufel von Hohlenfeldt, a German peer, in his 112th year, married a young lady, who was so jealous of him, that she discharged three of her maids before the honey-moon was over, lest they should transplant her in the affection of her dear spouse.

HOWEL.

A fool always talks; silence is the mark of wisdom.

DALTON (*continues*)

William Bay was punished by his father when he was 99 because he let his youngest sister, a child of two years old, walk without leading strings.

HOWEL.

Bray a fool in a mortar, and then you'll get the essence of folly.

DALTON.

The family of the Blackbirds is celebrated for longevity; the last John Blackbird, with his father, grandfather, were all interred in one church in one day.—An awful fight.

HOWEL [*rises.*]

No, no, I can't listen any longer; do you think I have no other use for my ears than to drink in such cursed stuff.

DALTON [*puts the newspaper under his arm.*]

It matters not—the largest ox has been a calf; it is only to convince you that a man of fifty-three can entertain hopes of living seventy-four years more.

HOWEL.

He that would indulge such a hope is neither more nor less than a blockhead, and he that wishes for it little knows what he wishes for. What solid pleasure can this world afford? If all the happy moments of my life were put together, I don't suppose they would amount to one poor hour.

DALTON.

Truly, life is a bubble, and yet the bee extracts honey from the bitterest weed.

HOWEL.

It has pleased Providence to deny such honey to my taste. We come into the world in tears; we are baptized in sorrow. In infancy the loss of a toy is sufficient to break our little hearts; in youth we are condemned to tread the thorny paths of learning, the one half and more of which it is necessary we should forget; then launched into the stormy sea of life, encircled by flatterers and scoundrels, pretended friends, that lay snares to entrap the foot of innocence and virtue; one scene of villany treads on the heels of another; you mistrust one man after another, till in the end you mistrust every one. Happy the man who can escape even himself, and make a friend of his own heart to commune with occasionally, who gets heartily tired of life, but alas! he is not permitted to lay it down when he pleases; not like a man at a feast, who can rise up when he is fatiated.

DALTON.

You have found the world worse than any other person; it must be a cursed wood that can't afford one good tree. Attend, let us speak sérieusement.

HOWEL [*aside.*]

What a troublesome fellow, yet I must bear it; I gave him my word, that's sacred.

DALTON.

Sérieusement, mon cher, you must have experienced additional affliction since yesterday, you were then in better spirits. What is it? what is it?

HOWEL.

Nothing, nothing, this fellow would frighten my poor Jenny to death. (*Aside.*)

DALTON.

Is it a secret? Then I don't wish to know it. When I see a padlock on a trunk, I am not bound

to tell what it contains—and the misfortune that I know not I can't help, but so much at least is certain, that love, sorrow, and a red nose can't be long concealed; but to come to our point, what think you of my sister?

HOWEL.

To be candid, I have bestowed very few thoughts on her; I believe she may be a very good girl.

DALTON.

'Huzza! I have it; love and a red nose, on my word, as the saying is; you shall put both your horses in one stall, my dear brother-in-law. Point de tout---no circumstances---straight on---the silent tongue gains nothing, and the boldest lover bears away the prize; the bad dog may start the hare, but it's the good one that must catch her.

HOWEL [*laughs loud.*]

It little struck me that I should laugh to-day [*in a passion*] What the devil do you take me to be? Do you believe—

SCENE XVII.

Enter BLUNT.

HOWEL.

My dear Blunt! Have you no message? Nothing to say?

BLUNT.

Yes Sir, if you are at leisure.

HOWEL.

I never had more in my life; come, make haste; next to my misfortunes your appearance is the most welcome; Heaven bless you! Go on.

BLUNT.

Give me leave to run for my papers?

HOWEL.

Be quick then if you regard my life; be quick.

[Exit BLUNT.]

SCENE XVIII.

DALTON.

You don't wish for my company.

HOWEL.

When did I wish for it? [*aside.*] No, no, don't trouble yourself. [*Aloud.*]

DALTON.

Be plain; say I trouble you at once; n'est il pas vrai?

HOWEL.

Yes, since you will have it so; your presence is always agreeable to me, but your cursed propositions and nonsensical French——

DALTON.

On my word I thought my conversation was not quite so dull, and if you reflect a little on my proposition, I think you will be of a different way of thinking.

HOWEL.

The only question is, Am I to consider myself a fool or not?

DALTON.

You will be no longer of that mind than you can bind a dog to a bone.

HOWEL.

The devil take your opinion, and if it was not not under your own roof ——

DALTON.

You would shew me the door.

HOWEL.

No, but I would beg of you to leave me to myself.

DALTON.

With all my heart, my own house is yours. Point des façons, mon cher! [*going.*] That was a very good chase, said the man, when he rid forty miles after a wild goose. [*Exit.*]

SCENE XIX.

HOWEL [*alone.*]

Ah well a day! am I so far lost that I must bear the impertinence of fools because I stand in need of their assistance. Why Howel wants every assistance because he is poor; no, no, but my poor Jenny! I must bear it on her account; she is a widow. How shall I make her acquainted with the dreadful news, and how shall I afterwards put her out of the power of want? [*Reflects a little and rises.*] Proud fool! do you now see that you are not as you once thought—a divine hero. [*Walks up and down, then seats himself, and reflects.*]

SCENE XX.

Enter BLUNT (with a large Account Book.)

Here I am again Sir.

HOWEL.

What do you want, Blunt?

BLUNT.

To speak with you Sir.

HOWEL (*starts up.*)

Go to the deuce with your conversation.

BLUNT.

But, Sir, it was by your orders.

HOWEL.

Have you lost your senses, man? A likely matter I should have ordered you to trouble my head

with your confounded nonsense. No, my dear Blunt, that is an old trick of yours, to cheat me into your chit chat.

BLUNT.

Do you remember how glad you were when you saw me a few minutes ago, and don't you recollect that you asked me if I had nothing to say to relieve you from the tedious conversation of Mr. Dalton?

HOWEL [*reflects a little.*]

How, Mr. Blunt? [*Shakes him by the hand.*] Don't be angry, I did not mean what I said, my thoughts were in such confusion. Well then, what have you to say?

BLUNT.

You know that we saved nothing from the fire, except your person, your daughter, and her son.

HOWEL.

Pray how fares the old man? You must supply him with all the necessaries of life, he must not want; but don't let him work.

BLUNT.

He shall want nothing; Lady Fletcher will take care of that; but he has given us to understand by signs that he wished to be employed in some labour that is not beyond his strength; he can't bear to be idle; he's amusing himself in a little business about the house.

(HOWEL going, BLUNT holds him by the arm.)

No Sir, you must stop and hear, if you please.

HOWEL.

Be quick.

BLUNT.

You know that our former misfortunes obliged us to borrow a great deal of money, which must

be paid by and by. The house is to be rebuilt. Do you know of any means by which that money can be raised?

HOWEL.

Not I truly, that's your business.

BLUNT.

I should like to know some one, but I have this very day [*stops short, puts his finger on his mouth*] I walked to town this morning for the purpose of borrowing money, but in vain; every one complains of the scarcity of cash, and, to add to the misfortune, I was told that your bill of 5000*l.* became due this day, and must be paid.

HOWEL.

To be sure it must be paid.

BLUNT.

Certainly, if the money can be procured, and Wotton's bill of 500*l.* is become due; he is an industrious tradesman, and can't afford to lie out of such a sum. He told me, with tears in his eyes, if it could not be directly paid, that he must commit an act of bankruptcy.

HOWEL.

He must be assisted, Blunt; it would be an act of treachery, nothing less than robbery, to reduce a worthy man to a state of beggary, for want of not being paid his lawful debts; he must be assisted.

BLUNT [*takes up a Paper.*]

Well, I know he ought to have what belongs to him; this is his bill, very correct and moderate, but by Heaven I know not where I shall get the money, except we take it from the 10,000*l.* you have allotted for the sick and needy in the hospital you built last year; it was to be paid in this

day, but perhaps it is still in the hands of the trustees.

HOWEL.

What are you mad? So that in order to relieve one or two, you would drive upwards of one hundred forlorn beings to perish in the streets; that must not be done.

BLUNT.

Then we must take the 1000*l*. Mr. W. Harris owes you; unless he pays it, I don't see that Mr. Wotton can get his money.

HOWEL.

You are very expert at giving advice; what would be gained by that? To make an industrious man a beggar to relieve another; no, you must raise money by some other mode. Hark'e, Mr. Blunt.

BLUNT.

Yes, but I am at a loss; I can see no possibility; the only hope I have is, that the melancholy news contained in the letter this morning is not true.

HOWEL.

True! depend upon it, it's true.

BLUNT.

I have still some faint hopes.

HOWEL (*in a passion.*)

Faint hopes; does it not state, as plain as words can state it, that Fletcher is no more. [*Door opens in the back ground, Lady Fletcher and Miss Harriet walk in.*]

LADY FLETCHER [*who catches the last words.*]

Fletcher is no more! Good God, what do I hear? [*Faints in the arms of Miss Harriet. Door is shut.*]

SCENE XXI.

HOWEL.

What is that?

BLUNT.

I am afraid it is Lady Fletcher.

HOWEL.

Possibly she has heard what I said; let us fly to her assistance; poor Jenny! [*Exeunt both; when the door is opened, Lady Fletcher is seen in the arms of Miss Harriet.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I. A Table uncovered.

[*Lady Fletcher sitting alone, in a melancholy posture, after a short silence.*] At length I am robbed of all my hope; alas, poor Jenny! why did you build your happiness on hope? What is hope? The most unsubstantial thing in the world; scarce the shadow of a shade; a shadow may be seen, but hope is invisible—the bauble of the vain, the inconsiderate, and the proud. [*Rises and walks up and down the stage.*]

SCENE II.

[*The old man enters with a tray to lay the cloth.*]

LADY FLETCHER.

What is the daughter of Howel brought to? The favourite toast of the giddy and the gay; she that was nurtured in the smiles of fortune; alas! where is the wretch that would exchange situations with her now? [*Wipes away a falling tear.*] Distressed Jenny! A forlorn widow!—Alas! poor man, under Heaven to thee I owe the only comfort that remains. [*The old man kisses her hand, and retires in haste.*]

Lady FLETCHER (alone.)

What does this avail? [*After a short pause.*] Poor man! he may have his afflictions; I am glad he does not share any of mine; O Jenny, Jenny, you should not call yourself the most distressed being in the world; you can utter your complaints, but he cannot, he must suffer in silence; there is even a pleasure in being able to communicate our sorrows.

SCENE IV.

Enter HOWEL.

My dear child, endeavour to compose your mind; think of your aged father, how your sorrows will afflict him.

LADY FLETCHER.

I have some time since learned to look on every object in its darkest point of view, and this is the last time that hope, deceitful hope, shall play the fool with me.

HOWEL.

Right, right, that is reasoning, my dear child; we now come so far, experience has taught us that hope is only another word for deceit; I was plagued with riches, I wished for poverty, I have obtained my wish, and, O God! too literally.

LADY FLETCHER.

But is that all our loss?

HOWEL.

All, we have no more to lose; distress stares us in the face! O Howel, Howel, you thought you were wise when you breathed that foolish wish; what a blockhead! perhaps you may not end your days even as happy as Swift in your own hospital. — [*Walks up and down quite discomposed.*] But shame on't, there are still other means. [*Aside.*]

LADY FLETCHER.

O my dear father, your uneasiness distresses me, why should you make yourself so unhappy, have I not lost more than you? Still you have a daughter, and your daughter's child, and those hands are not so weak that my father should want, and there are still bosoms filled with humanity.

HOWEL.

What am I doomed to in my old days---humanity, such a thing is not in nature; weep, yes the eye can weep, but to feel! No no, my dear, the heart of man is as hard as the skin of the rhinoceros.

SCENE V.

Enter MISS HARRIET [with a letter.]

A person in the next room delivered this letter, with tears in his eyes. It is for you, Sir, I believe. *[To Howel.]*

HOWEL.

Well, I have no more to fear. *[Opens the letter, and reads.]*

“SIR, The immediate want of the 500l. which
 “you owe me, will reduce me, wife, and five
 “children, to beggary; save, Sir, such a family
 “from the jaws of distress, which cannot fail to
 “call down the blessings of heaven on you and
 “yours. “Wotton.”

This was all that was wanting, the measure is now full, nay, it flows over.

LADY FLETCHER.

Five hundred pounds should make a man miserable, and a whole family; my father will never permit that; I am sure he must be assisted.

HOWEL.

How, in what manner, by heaven I am not able to do it.

LADY FLETCHER.

What 500l. so small a sum, my father should not hesitate, when it is to snatch a poor family from destruction; for heaven's sake, my dear father, assist him.

HOWEL.

No reproaches, my dear child, is your father a barbarian, do you think he would hesitate a moment, to deprive himself of the last sixpence, if he had sixpence, to relieve distress; save him, you say, but you don't remember that you were not able to save your own son a few days ago.

LADY FLETCHER.

I have merited the reproach, but—(*a knocking at the door*) who is there?

MISS HARRIET.

The man is impatient, that is he, I suppose.

HOWEL.

Lord, this is more than I can bear. [*Runs to the other side.*]

Enter WOTTON.

[*Falls on his knees before Lady Fletcher.*]

For heaven's sake assist me, don't precipitate me into the utmost distress, you don't know my situation.

LADY FLETCHER.

Rise unfortunate man, neither my father nor I can bear to see people suffer when we can afford them succour, but we ourselves are involved in the utmost distress, and can lend no relief.

WOTTON [*rises.*]

Help! Forgive me, my Lady, if I have given too much vent to my feelings; view me as the advocate of a distressed family, that look up to me for a morsel of bread. I only ask my own, your father can't be sunk so deep in distress, as not to be able to pay me all my poor 500l.

LADY FLETCHER.

Good heaven, what shall I do?

[The old man enters, and begins to lay the cloth.]

MISS HARRIET *[to Lady Fletcher aside, so that Wotton can't hear.]*

Can you afford him no assistance?

LADY FLETCHER.

None, none—I am deprived of all.

MISS HARRIET.

Can you see a man in such a situation, and hesitate to give him that precious picture you have?

LADY FLETCHER.

Good God, I have lost my husband, lost him for ever! and would you have me deprive myself of the last comfort, his picture? Yet, you are in the right, I thank you, you teach me my duty; stay a little, *[to Wotton]* you shall be assisted in a moment. His picture is deeply impressed in my heart—courage for once. *[Exit.]*

WOTTON.

O madam! I know you, and your father's noble way of thinking and acting.

SCENE VIII.

MISS HARRIET, WOTTON, OLD MAN.

MISS HARRIET.

Come here, Sir, quick, *(searches her pocket, and takes out a box)* take this, *[gives Wotton a box of jewels,]* carry them to town, and borrow some money on them; make haste, and send me your receipt.

WOTTON.

Heaven, what generosity! can I believe my eyes? heaven reward you! a few such beings on earth would make it a paradise.

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MISS HARRIET.

Oh! if there were not many who could sympathise with the distressed, the world would be miserable indeed. Quick, she's coming, keep silence, if you wish I should befriend you. [*Exit Wotton.*]

SCENE IX.

MISS HARRIET [*shuts the door.*]

I am quite happy at this incident, [*looks at the old man*] he won't betray me.

SCENE X.

LADY FLETCHER [*re-enters with the picture.*]

Here it is, where is the man?

MISS HARRIET.

The footman told me, I think, that he was called out by Mr. Blunt; it is probable Mr. Blunt has got the money; now all is well, keep your picture.

LADY FLETCHER.

I assure you, painful as it would be to part with it, I should have given it away on such a distressing occasion, but I cannot conceal it from you, that the thought pierced my very soul when I fetched it. Oh! that it had been painted on vellum, instead of being enamelled in gold! [*Looks on it, and dries her eyes.*]

MISS HARRIET.

Were I in your situation, I would not keep such a paltry thing, that would call tears into my eyes every time I looked at it, I don't like that.

LADY FLETCHER.

O my dear girl! you have not tasted the delicious pleasures of mutual love, and heaven preserve you when you do taste it from being left to cherish the remembrance of it like me; I loved Fletcher tenderly; I am certain Jenny was the

last word that trembled on his tongue; but your heart is too tender not to participate in my affliction, and I am unwilling to distress you if I could help it. [*Exit old man.*]

SCENE XI.

MISS HARRIET.

I confess that you have reason to mourn. I shan't quarrel with you for a few tears at times; once a week, I think, is sufficient for that, for it is certain that if Fletcher loved you, as you say he did, that he would not have left you to go to the East Indies, some hundred miles off.

LADY FLETCHER.

O my angel! you know not with what difficulty he tore himself from these arms, and how often my sighs shook his resolution; but we live in a world where the rigid laws of honour combat the noblest feelings of nature; the voice of love is lost in the savage yell of war. His country called, and he obeyed.

MISS HARRIET.

Then you could not have loved him so ardently; I am told that a wife, if she has a mind, can persuade her husband to any thing; were he mine, I should have locked him in my arms he; should not have gone, that is, if I loved him so passionately.

LADY FLETCHER.

But could you bear to see your husband dishonoured, rather than to part with him for a short time; she that loves in such a manner, loves not at all.

MISS HARRIET.

But I don't see what dishonour there can be in that; really I am at a loss to comprehend it.

LADY FLETCHER.

The subtlety of human understanding has invented a thousand chimeras and fancies to plague one another; this word honour is one of them, and the most cruel of all. My husband was a soldier—the name of a soldier, like the cloth he wears, is susceptible of the slightest stain; I need say no more. Alas! barbarian honour, thou hast planted thy bloody dagger in my heart. [*Dries her eyes.*]

MISS HARRIET.

Now for tears again; let us change the subject; listen, to-morrow is my birth day, and my brother intends to give a fête on the occasion, a—the—the—something I don't understand, I don't know what you call it, you must be of the party, and be merry.

LADY FLETCHER.

I cannot; it is impossible; no, my dear, but let not that damp your pleasure—I envy no one their pleasure because I can't partake of it.

MISS HARRIET.

You must indeed be of the party, we must endeavour to enliven your spirits. I am not a little angry with my brother, for he insists that I shall play the part of Proserpine, that is the name of a dog, and he knows very well that I can't bark; now have I not reason to be displeased with him, and would he not be angry, fond as he is of his dogs, if I insisted that he should act the part of Jowler?

LADY FLETCHER.

My dear, you mistake; Proserpine was a goddess, and your brother has called one of his hounds after her.

MISS HARRIET.

That was not treating the goddess well, I think ; if it was not so, I should take the part ; it would be a pity so fine a play should be spoiled on my account.

LADY FLETCHER.

I think so.

MISS HARRIET.

My brother tells me it will be a very fine one ; I'll tell you where he saw it. My father sent him some years since with a merchantman to a large town in France, that is called Nantz, I think, where he stayed for a month, saw the play, and learned some plaguy French. He would have stayed there a little longer, but the Captain, under whose care he was placed, would not consent to it.

LADY FLETCHER [*about to withdraw.*]

Well, you'll permit me to retire for a moment.

MISS HARRIET.

No, you shan't go till you consent to be of the party to-morrow ; I promise that we shall put you in good spirits ; the company must be very serious indeed that my brother would not enliven ; he is the life of whim when he has a mind ; now give me your word, and you shall go.

LADY FLETCHER.

I know not how to refuse you,—but——

SCENE XII.

Enter DALTON.

MISS HARRIET.

Ha ! there's my brother, he shall bear witness. Lady Fletcher has promised to be of our party to-morrow, and to banish all her cares.

LADY FLETCHER.

I have not, and it is impossible that I can.

DALTON.

Right, while the sun shines it is time to make hay, an ounce of sorrow never paid a pound of debt. Do me the favour to transact the business I desired.

MISS HARRIET.

You may depend on it—but do you endeavour to banish Lady Fletcher's sorrow. [*Exit Miss Harriet.*]

[*Lady Fletcher, going, stopped by Dalton.*]

SCENE XIII.

LADY FLETCHER, DALTON.

Have you any commands?

DALTON.

Commands, the slave commands the master, and the chicken teaches the hen; no, it is your's to command. I know your circumstances, you want money, and my fortune is at your feet. Vous n'avez qu'à vous vous enlever à votre gré.

LADY FLETCHER.

Sir, your generosity overpowers me, it is an offer that neither my father nor I can accept.

DALTON.

Your father, Madam, a bon entendeur peu des paroles, a good hearer makes a ready answer, you, you, you may command it; do you understand me?

LADY FLETCHER.

I must confess that I do not understand you.

DALTON.

Upon my word, I think I speak plain enough, and you don't appear so dull of apprehension; you can't persuade me that your scull is as empty as a poet's purse.

LADY FLETCHER.

Perhaps you don't wish to explain yourself. I shall spare you that trouble. [*Going.*]

DALTON [*holds her.*]

Not yet, stay a little, it is the first time in my life that I have been obliged to explain my own words; every person, even my hounds understand me; hear me; what was I saying? It must out; he that can't be silent, ought to be allowed to speak, is it not so?

LADY FLETCHER.

That proverb is not always just.

DALTON.

Is'nt it, madam, the nature of a dog to bark, and that of a cock to crow? hark'e now, tell me, have you not been very unhappy? but where is the snow to be found that fell last winter? and the cock that lost his head can crow no more.

LADY FLETCHER.

Sir, I beg your pardon, indeed I don't understand a single word of what you are pleased to say. (*Going.*)

DALTON [*holds her by the arm.*]

Why in such a confounded hurry? Stay, see, I'll say so much, that it fares with me as it does with my beagle, when he has a bone in view—that is not a bad allusion; you must not sell your cow for a pair of wooden shoes.

SCENE XIV.

[*The old man enters with plates, knives, &c. and begins to arrange them on the table.*]

DALTON.

I don't mind him, he can't hear us.

LADY FLETCHER.

I hope you will forgive me, when I tell you that I have no patience to day. [*Going.*]

DALTON.

Now you are impatient to know it, and I would not have you impatient; hark'e, she that is born a beauty is half married--and like looks for like; now see, I am a young man and rich, you a widow and poor, what two fitter to be united?

LADY FLETCHER.

I hope you are not in earnest, Mr. Dalton?

DALTON.

Upon my soul I am. Faint heart never won a fair lady; look, my dear, I give you the first proof of my passion. [*Offers to kiss her.*]

LADY FLETCHER [*pushes him off.*]

Impudent indeed!

DALTON.

Yes, that devil must be impudent indeed that dares to shew himself at noon-day; but don't be alarmed, I am too fond of nuts to play with the shells, and he must be a toney lumpkin indeed that can't cut a plumb-pudding.

LADY FLETCHER.

I now plainly see, that I have been mistaken in my opinion of you. I viewed you in the light of a brother, the guardian of my honour, but you have thrown off the mask, and in the room of the generous Dalton, I see an atrocious villain.

DALTON.

Villain! I shall convince you that I am not, but every body loves himself, says the crow to

the nightingale ; two words are as good as four ; will you be my wife ?

LADY FLETCHER.

And dare you ask me such a question, and on the very day too that I have received the most melancholy intelligence in my life ?

DALTON.

N'importe, I know those who did not take it amiss that this very question was proposed to them before even they expected to be widows. The sportsman that can't shoot flying is not worth powder and shot: hear me for a moment, do you like me, and will you be my wife——three words, yes or no ?

LADY FLETCHER.

No, never, and I heartily despise you.

DALTON.

You do well, it's all one to me, the fairest blossom does not always produce the sweetest fruit, and he must be an ass indeed that can't distinguish betwixt a hobby horse and a mule---so you are determined that you won't be my wife ? will you then be my mistress ?—it is all the same to me.

LADY FLETCHER.

Villain ! that exceeds all that I could conceive ; [*struggles to get away.*] Oh ! that my father should be indebted to your generosity. You have none, you have added insult to distress ; no, we shall rather beg through our native land first, no longer shall we breathe the air that your very breath has contaminated.

DALTON.

You give yourself airs, don't speak in that lofty tone, it does not become you, but I have not played my best card yet. The time will come, when you will call and I shan't hear, you shall

beckon and I shan't nod; take me when you can; I am no fool. [*Lady Fletcher flies off.*]

SCENE XV.

DALTON.

An old wolf is not to be alarmed at a loud cry. [*after a little silence.*] Ha! ha! ha! she believed, I suppose, that I was in earnest; yes, let her think so, she shall learn to know me from my right side; when a lie does good, truth would but hurt, and a purse filled with lies is better than an empty sack.

SCENE XVI.

Enter WOTTON.

WOTTON.

Sir, I dare not leave your house before I let you know a circumstance, which, if I did not, it might be imputed to me as a crime.

DALTON.

What is it?

WOTTON.

I came as an unfortunate man, to ask good Mr. Howel for 500l. which he owed me; your generous sister, in discharge of that debt, presented me with these diamonds, under the seal of secrecy, in order to raise the money on them.

DALTON.

Harriet's a good-natured creature, so she should, the apple falls not far from the tree, but why don't you convert them to the use she desired.

WOTTON.

I was afraid lest I should do wrong; unfortunate as I am, I would rather continue so than do a dishonest action.

DALTON.

You are an honest fellow—honesty is the best policy. Give me the diamonds:—here, (*gives Wot-*

ton a bank-note) take that, you see it is good. send my sister your bill, with a receipt at the bottom of it.—Not a syllable of what has passed mind.

WOTTON.

Heaven continue to preserve this house!—my family are more than happy. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE XVII.

DALTON *[alone.]*

That was a good action of Harriet, but one swallow does not make a summer; it requires more.

SCENE XVIII.

DALTON.

[HOWEL runs fast over the stage.]

DALTON.

Where are you going in such a hurry?

HOWEL.

Out of this house, before the roof falls on my head.

DALTON.

Don't be afraid of that, it is quite new.

HOWEL.

Basest of villains, to abuse us in such a manner, under the cloke of generosity; your charity and fine proverbs, all to seduce unsuspecting innocence, and the daughter of Howel too; but we despise you, you monster.

DALTON.

O Sir! it was a mere proposition I made, with a great deal of coolness; I am not so violent; hot love is soonest cold; he that places his affection on a woman and a halfpenny places it on two trifles, and he must be devilish fond of music that would give a guinea for an owl.

HOWEL.

Out with you, and your cursed proverbs—stop, I have fine proverbs too; do you know that if you open your mouth ever so wide, no roasted doves will fly into it. Misreckoning is no payment, impertinent mirth does not become an old horse; do you understand me?—and so fare you well.

DALTON.

Yes! go along when you please, I am not such a fool as to thatch my house with pancakes, and if I make a present of a nut, it is to get an apple in return; do you understand me? and then fare you well.

HOWEL.

Stop, I shall speak to you.

DALTON.

Yes! you shall soon feel that I am no fool; I know what I can do, and you shall know it too.

HOWEL.

I set you at defiance. [*Flies away.*]

SCENE XIX.

DALTON [*alone.*]

I believe he would fly on some wild goose chase if I did not stop him, but I will see if I can hinder him; hollo, Jack, Tom, William, where the devil are you?

SCENE XX.

DALTON [*and three servants.*]

DALTON.

Which of you can run the fastest to town?

JACK [*lame.*]

I think I can, master.

TOM [*stammering.*]

N-o, n-o, m-a-f-t-e-r, I c-a-n.

WILLIAM [*deaf.*]

What is your pleasure, Sir?

DALTON [*very loud.*]

Is there any one of you that can run to town for me?

JACK.

No, let me run, I shall be back in an instant.

DALTON.

You run, and can't walk.

TOM.

N-o-l-e-t-m-e, I-c-a-n-r-u-n-b-e-t-t-e-r-t-h-a-n
h-e-

JACK.

You be hanged---and can't speak---

DALTON.

Such blockheads, one of you can't be of the least service to me ; send me in the huntsman.

JACK.

But the huntsman is blind, Sir.

DALTON.

A pretty tavern, said the fox, when he fell in the trap laid for the wolf ; I think I had better go myself ; old Reynard never sent a better messenger than himself. I keep four good for nothings, and I can't make use of one of them. Do you hear, Jack ? saddle one of the horses ; if you can't run you can ride ; you know where Fairwell lives, desire him to come to me in all haste, and to bring a sheriff's officer with him ; come to me as soon as the horse is saddled ; and by that time I shall have a letter written. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Another Room.

HOWEL and LADY FLETCHER.

HOWEL [*takes Lady Fletcher by the hand.*]

Yes! my dear daughter, I shall recommend the old man to the care of Blunt, and we will leave this accursed rascal's house.

LADY FLETCHER.

Why won't yourself stay with Blunt? We know him, and we know that he will divide the last morsel with us.

HOWEL.

Girl, girl, would you consent that your aged father shall dishonour himself, by consuming the bread that Blunt has earned with the sweat of his brow in my service? — what would become of Blunt in his old days?

LADY FLETCHER.

But whither shall we go?

HOWEL.

I don't know, but the birds of the air and the beasts of the field are fed by the hand of Providence; and shall man, who is the peculiar care of heaven, despair? Could I but provide for you and your little one, I should feel no concern for myself; I am an old man, I am of no consequence. [*Walks up and down, very much agitated.*]

LADY FLETCHER.

Dear father, endeavour to compose your mind, we shall be happy yet; it is true our last asylum is taken away; it is not quite a year since death deprived you of your only sister.

HOWEL.

[Catches her hastily by the hand.]

It is true!— My sister, O my poor sister, how this scene would affect her gentle heart! Go and fetch your little baby in your arms, I'll help you to carry it. Williams is my brother-in-law, we'll go to him.

I have considered; my dear, I know he hates me. His conduct broke my poor sister's heart, yet after all I shall fly to him as my refuge. I'll haste to him, do what I never did before, or persuade myself to do. I shall cast myself at his feet, and entreat him to be a father to you and your infant; believe me, Jenny, it will melt his proud heart to see Howel levelled with the dust in his presence; he will not resist; the sight of the child will melt him; and when I have provided for you and the infant, I have gained my point, all that I wished for.—I shall go, I have conquered myself, Howel is victorious, Howel is victorious!

LADY FLETCHER.

O heavens! father, can you believe! *[Howel takes her involuntarily by the hand, and leads her to the door.]* Come, my dear child, haste, we have no time to lose.

[They meet Miss Harriet at the door.]

SCENE VI.

MISS HARRIET.

What means this haste, where are you going?

HOWEL.

I fly this house, where the sacred laws of hospitality are so basely violated.

MISS HARRIET.

I don't understand you; who has dared to insult you?

HOWEL.

Your brother is the most horrid monster that ever appeared in human shape.

MISS HARRIET.

Pardon me, Sir, I am sure my brother does not deserve such a name, I know him too well for that, and I am sure he little expects such language from you.

HOWEL.

From me! — it is easy to see from your speech that you and he are sister and brother.

MISS HARRIET [*offended.*]

I can laugh at all your expressions with regard to myself, but I should be glad to hear you explain yourself with respect to my brother; what has he done?

HOWEL.

A mere trifle, you may think; he attempted in the meanest manner to seduce my poor innocent Jenny, my only child—my daughter, a widow, a distressed woman, a female——

LADY FLETCHER.

And insult my poor father, and shewed us the door as beggars.

MISS HARRIET.

What! my brother?—impossible!

HOWELL.

Do you suppose us capable of telling you a falsehood? would you attempt to defend his conduct? I begin to perceive that you are in the plot.

MISS HARRIET.

O heaven, is it possible? My brother surely could not be guilty of such base conduct; I never

knew him to injure any person in my life; and if he is guilty of what you say, tho' he is my brother, I shall disown him, I shall never see him again.

LADY FLETCHER.

My dear, you are not bound to answer for the conduct of another, but it is all true.

SCENE III.

Enter FAIRWELL.

I have orders, Sir, to arrest you.

LADY FLETCHER [*kneels to Fairwell.*]

O heaven, my father, pity our situation, and be indulgent! [*Howel and Fairwell raise her up.*]

HOWEL.

Rise, my child, at whose suit do you arrest me?

FAIRWELL.

Read this. [*Gives him a paper; Howel reads it.*]

LADY FLETCHER [*to Fairwell.*]

What crime has my father committed?

FAIRWELL.

No crime, but the law must have its course.

HOWEL [*having read it over.*]

Very well, Sir, do your duty; Miss Harriet, read this, and then defend your brother if you can. If only one pure drop of blood is in your veins mixed with all that impure nature has given in common with your brother, that drop will freeze at his actions. [*Gives her the paper to read, walks up and down, violently agitated.*] After having insulted my mind in the basest manner, he arrests my person for the 600l. I owe him. Ha! would there had been another Shylock to have lent me that sum for one

pound of my flesh, he could not treat me with greater cruelty.

MISS HARRIET *[to Fairwell.]*

Can I believe my eyes, is it possible that my brother has been guilty of all this?

FAIRWELL.

You may believe your eyes, read this letter, here it is. *[Miss Harriet looks at it.]*

MISS HARRIET.

Hence forward I adopt you as my sister, *[to Lady Fletcher.]* I have no brother. How this would affect my poor father!

LADY FLETCHER *[turns to Miss Harriet in tears.]*

Did you suppose you had such a brother?

HOWEL.

They are not related, I hope there is none of his blood lurking in your heart.

MISS HARRIET *(pauses.)*

How can I call him brother? This is the last time I shall call him by that once-endearing name, and this is the first time I ever wished to have my fortune in my own power. *[Takes Howel by the hand.]* Worthy man! I had a father with a heart like your own; he is no more; I call on you to fill his place; from this moment I shall share my distress with you and my sister; let us pray that Heaven may avert the vengeance that must attend the conduct of my brother. *[Lady Fletcher rises, hastily flies out, and Harriet follows.]*

HOWEL.

Jenny, Jenny! *[Howel attempts to follow, the Sheriff's officer stops him.]*

SHERIFF'S OFFICER.

Sir, you can't go, you are my prisoner.

SCENE IV.

HOWEL, FAIRWELL.

HOWEL.

Right, I am out of my senses, I am not even the master of my own person. [*Walks to the door, and calls to John.*]

SCENE V.

Enter JOHN.

Sir.

HOWEL.

Look to my daughter, protect her. Send Mr. Blunt to me.

JOHN.

Mr. Blunt, Sir, is gone to town, and desired me to tell you if you enquired, that he would be back in less than an hour.

HOWEL.

Well then go, and do as I desired you. [*Exit JOHN.*]

SCENE VI.

HOWEL, FAIRWELL.

HOWELL.

Now what will you do with me? Where will you take me to?

FAIRWELL.

You shall soon know that, Sir.

SCENE VII.

Enter Lady FLETCHER.

[*With the picture in her hand, followed by Miss Harriet. Lady Fletcher runs towards Fairwell.*]
There, Sir, this will release my father; will not this be sufficient for 600l. it is invaluable, but distress wrings it out of my hands.

HOWEL.

No, no, my child, it is the picture of my son-in-law; [*Lady Fletcher sighs.*] he is no more; I charge you, on your peril, Sir, not to take it; it is not mine, it is her's; death deprived her of the

original, and I am sure I shall not be so cruel as to deprive her of the copy.

LADY FLETCHER.

Take it, Sir, I am sure, dear as it is to me, it cannot be better disposed of.

MISS HARRIET.

Why do you hesitate, Sir? Why don't you take it?

FAIRWELL.

I am sure it is not equal, in my eye, to the value the lady sets on it; it is not worth 600*l.* but when that is even paid I have another demand to the amount of 5000*l.* assigned to Mr. Dalton, and which is to be paid without delay.

Lady FLETCHER [*casts herself in a chair.*]

Good heaven, that the earth should produce such monsters!

HOWEL.

Bring me the foulest fiend of hell, and he is an angel of light to this villain. Do your duty, Sir, I am ready.

FAIRWELL.

I am ready.

HOWEL.

Conduct me to that place which is appointed for me; the darkest dungeon will be a paradise to me in comparison to this hell.

Lady FLETCHER (*rises impatiently, and embraces her father.*)

Nought shall separate us; no power shall tear me from this dear bosom; the wall that encloses him shall be my habitation; also, Mr. Fairwell, if you have any feelings of humanity left, notwithstanding your profession, listen to my request, it is the only favour I ask.

FAIRWELL.

Excuse me, Madam, I don't want feelings, but I must discharge my duty.

MISS HARRIET.

Duty! In what law is it found that one man shall ruin another? Is there such a law in England? Duty! Where is it written that it is our duty to torment our fellow-creatures? That, I am sure, instead of a duty would be a crime in England. These are the effects of travelling on the continent; there he must have learned these cursed doctrines; no Englishman, I am persuaded, ever could behave so barbarously—but here he comes.

LADY FLETCHER.

What! is he coming? Oh! I must fly the vulture as the dove flies the hawk. [*Exit running out.*]

SCENE VIII.

FAIRWELL, HOWEL, MISS HARRIET, DALTON.

HOWEL.

Now rejoice over the works of thy own hands! dost thou not rejoice that thou hast been able to triumph over the haughty heart? Dost thou not rejoice that thou hast been able to humble the proud heart of Howel?

DALTON.

So I find there is truth in the French proverb—*Bien rit qui rit le dernière*; pride in a poor man resembles a rich embroidered coat on the back of a beggar.

MISS HARRIET.

And can you find in your heart to distress an innocent family, who, instead of doing you the least harm, repaid you with gratitude and tears? How can you deprive a worthy old man of his only consolation, his liberty and the conversation of his amiable daughter? How can you?

HOWEL (*smiles in anger.*)

Tell me a crime of which he is not capable.

DALTON [*to Miss Harriet.*]

Yes; why do you ask me such a silly question? Why should I not do it? Has not every man a right to his own? Besides, the sum is large.

HOWEL.

Of which he has gained the greatest part by the dirtiest means, that he might accomplish his base ends.

FAIRWELL.

Sir, his demand is perfectly legal.

DALTON.

Silence, we can talk about that hereafter; I can't afford to lose so large a sum; I must secure myself; clip the wings of the bird, and it cannot fly, and when there is no provender for the horse, we shut the stable door.

MISS HARRIET.

Now I am convinced of that which I never—

SCENE IX.

Enter Lady FLETCHER in a hurry, with her child in her arms.

Distressed Jenny, to leave thy father in the hands of robbers; now bring us where you please; I defy you to bring me into a more abominable prison than this house. [To Fairwell.] Now, Sir, make haste; put an end to this matter; be quick; I long to escape out of this place.

FAIRWELL.

I am only Mr. Dalton's attorney; if he choose—

DALTON [to Howel.]

No, Sir, I do not want feelings; he that wants feelings wants every thing. No, Sir, Mr. Howel's word is sufficient; he shall not be arrested; it was nothing more than to satisfy the forms of the law; I am too——

HOWEL.

Like the crocodile you can weep over your prey; lie upon your pity, thus the cat plays with the mouse.

LADY FLETCHER.

We despise your pity, we are impatient to depart.

MISS HARRIET [*to Dalton.*]

And I shall accompany you?

DALTON.

Stay a little, Madam, if you please, or rather if I please. I command—my commands must be obeyed; women like mad horses must be ruled with a tight rein, as I told you. Sir, you are only confined to this house, which you must not leave till I get my money, as to the rest——

HOWEL [*takes Lady Fletcher by the hand.*]

Come, my dear, let us go.

DALTON.

Give me your word of honour that you won't depart.

HOWEL.

How darest thou speak of honour? The sacred name is sullied in coming through your lips. Well, I give thee that word, which is more precious than all thy wealth.

DALTON.

I am proud to perceive that I am one of the friends of Mr. Howel; the word *Thou* an Englishman seldom makes use of, except to his intimate friend.

HOWEL.

Do thy utmost. [*Exit with Lady Fletcher.*]

SCENE X.

MISS HARRIET, DALTON, FAIRWELL.

MISS HARRIET.

My brother, if you have the least pity or love for your sister—if you have, now is the time to convince her of it. Do not then be so cruel—if you

conceive that you have been ill used---reflect, perhaps you deserved it.

FAIRWELL.

I dare assure you, Madam, that your brother---

DALTON.

Silence, Mr. Fairwell! Are you mad? Would you have me lose so large a sum? Money and women must not be played with; money is no fool unless it gets into a fool's hands, and I think I am not---but it is no matter for that.

Miss HARRIET.

Very well, since money is your idol, it is a sin to separate you, but I must insist on paying it out of my fortune. Are you not my guardian?

DALTON.

Yes, and that was one of the wisest things my father ever did, to appoint me such; he knew you; none but a madman would throw money into a bottomless drawer. So you would ruin yourself, would you?

Miss HARRIET.

Surely it can't hurt you if I ruin myself, as you call it; you shall find I shall be no burthen to you: don't be so cruel.

DALTON.

Make yourself easy, you don't understand all, or you would not talk in the manner you do; it is done, and what is done can't be undone, and I will have my money to the last farthing.

Miss HARRIET.

May that moment be cursed when I---

FAIRWELL.

Give me leave, Madam.

DALTON [*to Fairwell.*]

Would you put your fingers once more betwixt the bark and the tree? No, my dear sister, I may be compassionate.

MISS HARRIET.

You compassionate---you have learned your compassion from monsters---or from---with what accursed joy have I seen you worry a poor hare; no, no, after what has happened I should sooner expect pity from a gaoler or a hangman; but there is a day, and I shall leave you to Heaven; perhaps you may yet feel what distress is; perhaps you may yet taste a little of that bitter cup you have filled for a helpless innocent family.

DALTON.

Not so fast, the ass should not dance faster than the fiddle, or he is tired before he gets through the tune.

MISS HARRIET.

Curse on your proverbs. [*Exit.*]

SCENE XI.

DALTON. FAIRWELL.

DALTON.

Ha, ha, ha, I believe she's angry; with all my heart; that's nothing; it's a squeamish stomach that can't digest the wing of a lark; yes, yes, she shall soon be of another way of thinking.

FAIRWELL.

I must confess I can't understand this plot.

DALTON.

Who the deuce expects you should? Did I send for you to propose riddles to you? Are you to dive into my mind, Mr. Fairwell? so you want to set up for a man of deep penetration, you are not to spoil my plan---an old hen, at times, may make her nest in a bunch of nettles.

FAIRWELL.

Nothing but the highest confidence in your honesty could persuade me to act the part I have done in this matter, and woe on you if you deceive my conscience.

DALTON.

Ha, ha, ha, Voila mon homme de conscience, an attorney talk in this manner; the very shark of human kind; we shall talk more of this matter hereafter.

SCENE XII.

Enter the old man with a coal-scuttle, puts some coals on the fire.

DALTON.

You have done as I directed you.

FAIRWELL.

Yes, Blunt is this moment in gaol.

DALTON.

Well, order is the soul of business; but have you settled it in such a manner that he can be enlarged to-night?

FAIRWELL.

Yes.

DALTON.

This is a mere trifle in my plan; it may end in putting the old misanthrope in a little better humour with himself and the world. He shall get the money back again from me, but [*takes a letter from his pocket*] Le viola le grand coup de maitre, this pill he must swallow too, though it hurts me a little; it must be thrust down; all is well that ends well; ill must be drawn away by ill; a bad pair of shears makes a very bad taylor.

FAIRWELL.

The contents, Sir.

DALTON.

Yes, that is the question; one fool can ask more questions in ten minutes than a wise man can answer in as many years; it is sealed for the very purpose that the contents may not be known, but you must administer the draught. [*exit old man.*]

SCENE XIII.

FAIRWELL.

Very well, but I am afraid.

DALTON.

Nonsense, as you have said A, you must say B, [*Fairwell takes the letter*] and then all is well again. I shall take a ride on other business [*goes to the door, calls Tom*] none of the servants within.

SCENE XIV.

Enter Tom [*stammering.*]

W-h a-t's y-o-u-r p-l-e-a-f-u-r-e, S-i-r?

DALTON.

All things must be in order, I shall take a ride—the pistols must be loaded—there are highwaymen, and he must be a cursed ninny that would let himself be robbed or knocked down, if he could help it—prudence is a virtue—do you hear?

I-t f-h-a-l-l—i-t s-h-a-l-l b-e d-o-n-e. [*Exit.*]

SCENE XV.

DALTON. FAIRWELL.

DALTON.

Come along with me into my room, you shall get the money. Hark'ee, some one is coming, and if I am right it is himself; I don't like to see him before I can—*Monfieur vous voila gueri.* [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE XVI.

HOWEL. JOHN.

HOWEL [*in a hurry with his sword.*]

Where is he, that infamous scoundrel?

JOHN [*holds him.*]

For Heaven, master, can you be certain that Mr. Dalton is the man?

HOWEL.

Can it be any one else? Let me loose, I'll turn all my rage against you.

JOHN [*holds his arm.*]Is this the way in which you would reward a faithful servant, because he would preserve you from committing such a mischief, in a moment when you have no power over yourself? [*Takes the sword from him.*]HOWEL [*casts himself into a chair.*]Lord! what was I about to do? How weak is man [*to JOHN*] I would revenge myself on you an innocent man; by Heaven it was my body, my soul had no share in it.---Can you forgive me?

JOHN.

Forgive you, Sir! O yes, my dearest master, speak no more about it.

HOWEL.

Tell me how you came to know it, and what you heard.

JOHN.

The man told me, that he had just come from town, and that he had seen Mr. Blunt carried to prison; he was told that Mr. Fairwell this morning had demanded a debt from you, which he said you owed, but that Mr. Blunt had paid it by giving him a note of hand for 1000l. with a check on his banker to the amount of 6000l. and that it was for the 1000l. he was arrested; Mr. Fairwell's

name was only mentioned, not a word of Mr. Dalton.

HOWEL.

Oh, the two knaves Fairwell and Dalton are the same in signification, they only differ in sound, like Satan and the Devil. Honest Blunt! You may go, John.

JOHN [*aside.*]

But for certain reasons I'll take this with me.
[*Exit with the sword.*]

HOWEL [*alone.*]

Honest Blunt, you must suffer with me too--- what a sacrifice on my account---willing to save thy master---what! thy master? no, thy friend--- then thou art mine, and my only friend too. [*Rises and walks up and down the stage very much agitated.*] Alas! I could bear my own misfortunes patiently, but to involve another---it is more than I can bear---it sets resolution at defiance. [*Casts himself in a chair, lays his arm on the table, and his head on his arm. Curtain drops.*]

ACT V.

SCENE.

Same room.

HOWEL. ANDREW.

Enter ANDREW [quickly.]

I think I shall find my good old master here; he that saved me from destruction; see! Is not that he that sits there? Soft, he is asleep, and to whom can sleep be more welcome than to the honest, the generous, and the humane? But can it be true what I have heard on the way, that his circumstances are so bad? I almost wish it for my own sake, that I might have the same opportunity

of convincing him of my gratitude; this heart shall never forget what Mr. Howel did for me and mine.

HOWEL [*awakes.*]

Now have you slept you old fool? Is sleep made for you? Does sleep visit the distressed? There we see the power of this poor case of flesh and blood over the mind; the feeble body demands its rights, and receives them in spite of the soul. [*Rises. Andrew starts to see him.*] Who are you my friend? Who do you want to speak with?

ANDREW [*keeps silence, and looks with a smile on Howel.*]

Don't you know me, Sir?

HOWEL.

Who are you? Won't you answer?

ANDREW.

Don't you know me, Sir?

HOWEL.

No.

ANDREW.

Is it possible that your old servant should have been so entirely worn out of your memory? Can you forget Andrew, your generosity saved me and my parents from hunger and want.

HOWEL.

I know nothing about it. [*with indifference.*]

ANDREW.

Do you not recollect the morning, kind Sir, when you gave me the key with your own hand, and ordered me to take as much money as I wanted out of your desk, to snatch my father and mother out of prison for debt.

HOWEL [*reflects.*]

I don't recollect it.

ANDREW.

Oh, Sir, a noble mind does so many generous actions, that it cannot recollect one in a thousand, but the circumstances of my father's situation were such, that perhaps a little reflection will bring it to your memory.

HOWEL [*pauses.*]

Ay, ah, is it you, Andrew? My good friend Andrew, my memory begins to fail me.

ANDREW.

You turned me off immediately, and desired me never to enter your house again, because I mentioned it.

HOWEL.

And why have you done it?

ANDREW.

I didn't think this house was yours, Sir, but this was the only command of yours that I could not obey.

HOWEL.

Why not?

ANDREW.

The 7000*l.* I took from your desk, Sir, I have looked on as a loan I ought to pay again as soon as it was in my power.

HOWEL.

Are you mad?

ANDREW.

No, Sir, through your generosity I am now a happy man; I joined my father in a farm, and by diligence and the blessings of heaven we have so far improved it that I can pay my debt. I have had the money for some time in my pocket on purpose to deliver it to you myself, together with

my warmest thanks, but business prevented me till yesterday, when I got an account of the unhappy fire, I took horse immediately, and rode night and day to return your property, and here it is. [*Presents him with bank notes*]

HOWEL.

You must be frantic, you have—

ANDREW.

Consider, Sir, it is your noble heart that speaks; you must, if you reflect a little, be convinced of the truth of all I have said; take your own, it is yours. [*On giving him the notes, Howel turns aside, and refuses to take them, Andrew lays them on the table.*]

HOWEL [*throws them aside.*]

What does all this mean? Who lent you this money? Why should he have been such a fool? No, this trick won't do. [*ANDREW takes them up and offers them once more to HOWEL.*] Go, I tell you, or I shall do what would hurt me—order you out of the room.

ANDREW.

That would be too hard to turn out an old faithful servant for endeavouring to discharge part of his duty.

HOWEL.

But is it fair that you should come and tell me such a story.

ANDREW.

You know best whether your circumstances are such that you can be without money. If I return and tell my father that I left you in such a situation, I know he will disown me; on my father's account, then, accept of what is your own; he is

an old man, I am his only son, and would you make him displeased with me.

HOWEL.

He is a fool; I cannot make use of it; he is old, you say, then he'll want it.

ANDREW.

I dare not return with it, I cannot make use of it as I would; you shall see the value I set on these notes, you will not accept of them. [*Runs to put them in the fire.*]

HOWEL [*stops him.*]

Fie, Andrew, what would you do? Commit a crime-- that sum would make many a poor man happy.

ANDREW.

Heaven pardon me, Sir, but I did not know what I was doing; your situation has put me entirely out of my senses.

HOWEL [*takes him by the hand.*]

Honest friend, leave me to myself--solitude is pleasing to me--go hence--tell your father--make him happy--think sometimes on your old master, and it will be a pleasing reflection to him, that he has found two grateful men in this world; poor Blunt! (*Sighs.*)

ANDREW.

How can you bid me be happy? How can I leave this place, when you won't permit me to do that which would make me happy.

HOWEL.

Consider, my friend, that for one that can do good, there are a thousand wretches in the world, and one hundred that could do good for one that wishes to do it; consider, then, what riches

you possess in this world; take this [*shakes him by the hand*] as a token of everlasting friendship: now leave me to myself; peace be with you---farewell.

ANDREW (*going.*)

I must find out some other means; I see he wants the money, but his noble heart---

SCENE II.

HOWEL (*alone.*)

That's an honest fellow, but is that any reason I should deprive him of so much money, the loss of which is so much, that he would feel it all the rest of his life? No, that would be too selfish; if there were many such in the world, then it would be worth living in, but as it is, the thought of living one single day startles me.

SCENE III.

Enter JOHN [with a letter.]

A person gave me this, and desired me to deliver it to you directly.

HOWEL.

What kind of person? Do you know him?

JOHN.

No, Sir, but he told me he came from town.

HOWEL.

Let me see [*reads the superscription*] To Thomas Howel, Esq; I don't know if it's worth reading (*lays it on the table*) it may not be of any importance---stay, I don't know that---John, you may go.

(*Exit JOHN.*)

SCENE IV.

HOWEL (*alone.*)

I must read it, it is a piece of cowardice not to read a letter. (*Opens the letter and reads it.*)

SIR—The cruelty with which you have this day ordered Mr. Blunt to put an execution into my house, to the amount of 1000*l.* which I owe you, has thrown me into despair; before you read this through it will be out of your power to relieve me, but my crime shall rest upon you and yours; perhaps I might have escaped your prosecution if I had followed your example, for it is said, and I now believe it to be true, that you have deceived your creditors by setting fire to your house, but I have lived an honest man, and shall die so too.

WALTER HARRIS.

HOWEL (*throws the letter away.*)

Now, now, I am at ease (*a fit of wild laughter*) Howel a murderer, and an incendiary into the bargain; one of the two would be sufficient, but murder---that is too horrid---it makes my blood run cold in my veins. Ah, Blunt, Blunt, what have you done? and that against my positive commands; oh, may every drop of his blood lie burning on your conscience---but what are you doing, Howel? horrid Howel---you accuse honest Blunt, your friend, your tried and approved friend; he is undone, and you are undone yourself; how, in that case, can you relieve him? (*reflects a little*) is it possible? perhaps it is---yes (*runs in a hurry*) come, I shall save him yet; Andrew, Andrew, now I want your money. (*Runs out.*)

SCENE V.

A room hung with blunderbusses, pistols, and with all that belongs to a huntsman; in the back ground on the one side a screen, on the other, at some distance, a table with a writing desk, and a little box with balls. Dalton in a riding dress, putting on his boots. William with the spurs in his hand. John stands at the table, cleaning a case of pistols.

DALTON, WILLIAM, TOM.

DALTON [*drawing on his second boot.*]

Now the plot must burst.

WILLIAM.

I hope not, the boots are quite new.

DALTON.

Ha, ha, ha, c'est un bête que celui ci; put on my spurs.

WILLIAM.

Spurs, that may be.

DALTON (*bawls out.*)

Put on my spurs, I say.

WILLIAM.

You need not speak so loud Sir, I hear you very well.

DALTON.

In this instance the proverb is out, as we hollow in the wood, we are answered.

WILLIAM.

I beg your pardon, I could not answer, because I did not hear you speak. [*Dalton and Tom laugh.*]

DALTON [*cries*]

Make haste and put on the other—[*William does so*] let me see Tom that you make them pistols clean.

WILLIAM.

Yes, Sir, fetch the shoe-brush.

TOM.

T-h-e-y sh-a-l-l sh-i-n-e l-i-k-e si-l-v-e-r.

DALTON.

And then you must load them as usual, with a good ball in each. [*Exeunt.*]

WILLIAM [*going.*]

It is very fine weather, but a little cold.

SCENE VI.

TOM (*alone, stuttering.*)

Now I think they'll do, they are clean enough, I must load them; [*takes the powder horn and primes them,*] this is the first thing ought to be done, [*puts powder into his hand, and afterwards into the pistol*] and this is number three, [*puts in the wadding*] and now we come to number four, what is this? [*looks into a little box of balls*] I must pitch upon a good one; this will do. Now, gentlemen highwaymen, which ever of you shall receive one of these pills in your front, will never have occasion to complain of the head-ache.

DALTON [*within.*]

Come, Tom, directly.

I am coming, Sir, [*lays the ball down in the box.*]*Enter* ANDREW [*at the opposite door.*]

I cannot think of leaving this place, all things seem to be in disorder in it, I cannot find out the meaning of any one thing. Blunt, where can he be, I can't get to speak with Lady Fletcher, the old man is all in confusion, all that I can make out is, that there is more than one misfortune, and

that my poor old master is on the brink of despair. He will not accept of this money, though in all justice it belongs to him, and I know but too well that he wants it. No, it is impossible that I can set out with it, I must find out some sly method of conveying it into his hands. [*walks up and down a little*] Yes, that will do, and this is what I want, [*comes up to the writing-desk*] sits down and writes a few words on a sheet of paper, these few words will be enough, [*takes the bank notes out of his pocket, and puts them in the letter*] this money, a wafer, and a short direction to Mr. Howel, is enough. I'll lay it here, it will find it's way to the owner's hands, now I can go when I please, I have done my duty--but I must first go to town, I must know something of his real situation before I set out for home. Stay, I hear a foot coming this way, I shall hide myself behind this screen, for I would not for the world that any one should see me here; they would suspect immediately that the letter came from me, and that would spoil all. [*hides behind the screen.*]

SCENE VII.

HOWEL.

It's in vain, he is off? Why not then, I shall leave it to heaven to provide for old honest Blunt. [*sits down.*] O Howel, Howel, you that could once make others happy, and lend assistance yourself, now weak impotent man you have lost all, all—even your good name, your reputation; you are charged with the horrid crime of murder, upbraided with the name of an incendiary [*rises violently.*] No! Courage, Howel, you have not lost all, you have a good conscience still left; it is not in the power of malice to rob you of that, what more can the world rob you of---your life, a fine treasure truly, but they won't do you that favour, that would be to render a little service to Howel

indeed, the world has forbade it, [*approaches the table, and perceives the letter*] a letter, I have received three letters to day, the sight of one fills me with terror, [*reads the superscription to Mr. Howel*] another invention of that infernal fellow Dalton; pray heaven forgive him, for the snares that he has laid to entrap me, I can easily forgive him. [*Sees the pistols, snatches one of them, takes out the ram-rod, and puts in a ball.* Ha! welcome to me, my kind deliverer. God bless you, Jenny, and forgive me my last act of weakness. (*At the instant he put the pistol to his ear, Andrew rushes out, and seizes his arm; pistol fires off in the air.*)

ANDREW.

God defend my soul, what would you do? (*On the report of the pistol, Dalton enters at one side, and the old man at the other.*)

DALTON.

This comedy had like to have ended in a tragedy.

OLD MAN.

My father! [*Embraces Howel*]

HOWEL.

My father? What does this mean?

DALTON [*looks the old man full in the face.*]

Que diable, why he speaks.

OLD MAN.

Yes! my father, in my person behold your son! [*takes off the grey hairs, throws off the great coat, and stands in his uniform---as Sir William Fletcher.*]

SCENE VIII.

HOWEL, DALTON, SIR WM. FLETCHER, ANDREW.

(*Enter LADY FLETCHER and Miss HARRIET.*)

LADY FLETCHER, [*in a hurry.*]

My father, what have you done!

MISS HARRIET.

Good heaven, what is the matter.

HOWEL.

I was going to play the fool, but look here---

Lady FLETCHER [*surprised.*]

Do I dream, am I awake! O my dear Fletcher, Fletcher! [*embraces her.*]

SIR WM. FLETCHER.

O my dearest Jenny.

HOWEL.

Oh Andrew, my good genius sent you hither.

LADY FLETCHER.

And it is heaven alone that sent my husband at such an awful crisis.

ANDREW.

Happy accidents.

SIR WM. FLETCHER.

In these moments, [*shews her the old man's dress,*] did you know me, my Jenny, and you Miss Harriet; here you see the man to whom you behaved so generously.

MISS HARRIET.

Wonderful!

LADY FLETCHER.

It is you, my Fletcher, in the character of the old man; I was not able to account for my own feelings, but it was strange, the emotions which I felt, on seeing you in the old man's dress.

HOWEL.

But what does all this mean?

SIR WILLIAM FLETCHER.

I arrived in England, and heard that my father-in-law was not cured of his little foibles, so I was resolved to venture upon a cure; I can't deny that a small desire to see my Jenny in a private

manner, formed no small part of my plan; I confess it was inconsiderate, but I don't know that you can forgive me, my dear.

LADY FLETCHER.

Forgive! yes, and I seal the forgiveness thus
[*kisses him*]

SIR WILLIAM FLETCHER.

I came hither to put my plan into execution, the unlucky fire prevented it for some days; at last I entered the house, and found every thing was in the way I wished, but in the beginning I was not able to comprehend the conduct of Mr. Dalton.

HOWEL.

Conduct the most shocking!

DALTON.

Not so fast; I may be found, Sir, in the end, like the pine-apple, rough without and soft within. It's well for me that this deaf rogue could hear so well, let him answer for me.

SIR WILLIAM FLETCHER.

No, Sir, friendship for you, and an ardent wish to serve you, I assure you, were his sole objects; you may believe me; I can answer with safety that his intention was neither to undo my father, nor seduce my wife; I thank you, generous friend
[*Shakes Dalton by the hand.*]

MISS HARRIET.

This is my brother, now I know him again.

DALTON.

Don't thank me, Sir, I don't desire thanks, I am a fantastical blockhead, an odd kind of fellow; the last remedy was the letter from Walter Harris; it was too strong, to be sure, and it required the most artful management; arsenic and satire should be administered with a nice hand; in that case the

first restores health, and the second corrects our manners, otherwise they destroy both.

HOWEL.

Forgive me, Mr. Dalton --generous man, it was you that sent the letter which conveyed the melancholy account of Fletcher's death.

DALTON.

Yes, but that was not the only fictitious letter I sent you. Il'y en a bien d'autres.

SCENE XI.

[Enter BLUNT and FAIRWELL.]

DALTON.

You came as if you were called---all is well that ends well, a good proverb. Finis coronus opus, says the Latin.

BLUNT.

Sir William Fletcher!

SIR WILLIAM FLETCHER.

Yes, honest Blunt, it is I.

HOWEL [*takes Andrew by the hand.*]

Yes, Blunt, and here is my kind benefactor.

ANDREW.

I only endeavoured to repay a little of my debt.

FAIRWELL [*to DALTON.*]

Now the play is over.

DALTON.

Yes.

FAIRWELL [*to BLUNT.*]

Here is your bond and your check; Mr. Dalton has paid the money, and it was only under the

conviction of his honesty, that I could prevail on myself to act the part I did.

MISS HARRIET.

My brother and I could not believe you were a bad character—you that never injured any one.

DALTON.

These are your jewels my good girl, I see you are my sister in verity---a kiss---honest Wotton delivered them to me.

LADY FLETCHER.

How many shocks have I experienced this day.

HOWEL.

[Takes up the letter.]

Mr. Dalton, this belongs to you, another article of your manufacture.

DALTON *[looks at it.]*

No, this comes from another hand.

HOWEL *[opens it.]*

MISS HARRIET *[to Dalton.]*

My only wish now is to see London.

HOWEL *[reads the letter.]*

“Honoured Master,

I have contrived this mode of paying my just debt with gratitude.” *[takes Andrew by the hand]*
No, my honest friend, keep your money, you see I don't want it now. *[Embraces his daughter and Fletcher.]*

BLUNT *[to Andrew.]*

I return you my warmest thanks.

SIR WILLIAM FLETCHER *[to Andrew.]*

Keep your money, my worthy friend, we have lost much it is true, but we have abundance left;

haste to your good old father, and tell him all.
Death only shall tear me from my Jenny's arm
again.

LADY FLETCHER.

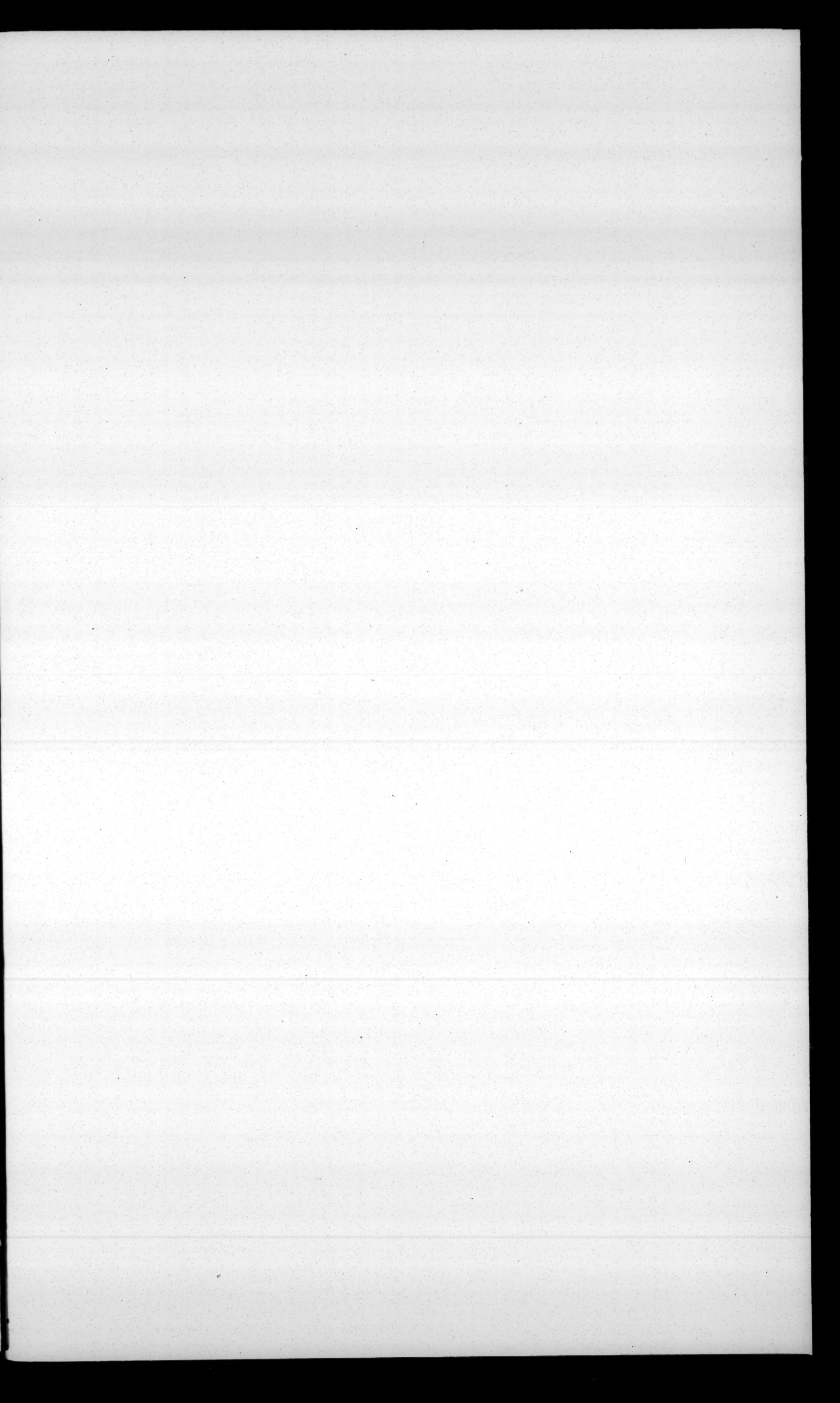
My dearest Fletcher.

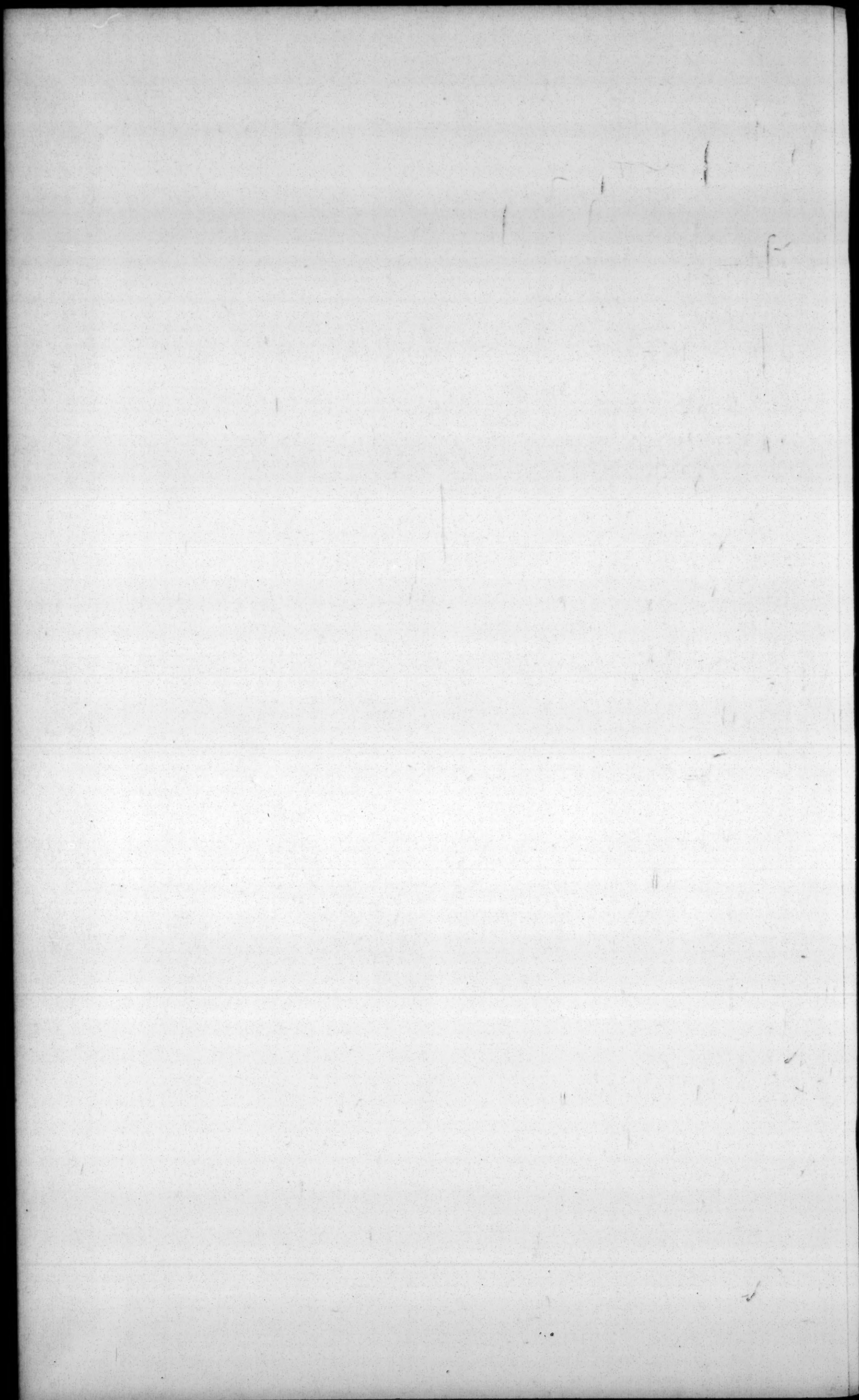
HOWEL.

I once thought I should never smile again. Give
me a kiss my dearest Harriet, and rest assured of
my friendship to the last pulsation of my heart.
How short-sighted the human mind! Who can look
into futurity-- how unmanly to despair, when a
single moment can change the scene? Who knows
but the happy moment of relief was posting on the
wing, when the fool raised his hand against his own
life, but came too late. May I be held out as an
example to such feeble minds, as well as I have
experienced, that it is better to be too rich than
too poor, but true happiness lies in the golden
mean.

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THE END.





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